

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 IO-13 JUSE-00
NSAE-00 SNM-02 TRSE-00 USIA-06 NSC-05 OES-07
OMB-01 L-03 AID-05 AGRE-00 /064 W
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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3038
INFO DEAHQS WASHDC
INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

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BOGOTA FOR BOURNE AND FALCO

EO: 11652: N//
TAGS: SNAR, MX
SUBJECT: NARCOTICS . POSSIBLE USE OF LANDSAT DATA IN
NARCOTICS PROGRAM

REF: MEXICO 9421

1. SUMMARY: MEXICAN ATTORNEY GENERAL (AG) HAS DECIDED THAT MULTISPECTRAL PHOTOGRAPHY (MOPSS) HAS EXTREMELY LIMITED UTILITY IN ERADICATION PROGRAM AND PROPOSES TO RELY ON VISUAL RECONNAISSANCE. INABILITY OF EITHER MOPSS OR VISUAL RECON TO COVER MEXICO ADEQUATELY SUGGESTS THAT ANOTHER TYPE TOOL IS NEEDED TO PROVIDE COMPLETE SYSTEMATIC COVERAGE OF ENTIRE AREA. EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED PROPOSAL FROM BENDIX CORPORATION TO INVESTIGATE FEASIBILITY OF USING DATA GENERATED BY LANDSAT SATELITES. WE RECOMMEND ACCEPTANCE OF BENDIX PROPOSAL. END SUMMARY.

2. REFTEL REPORTED THAT AG FLORES HAS DECIDED TO RELY
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ON VISUAL RECONNAISSANCE TO IDENTIFY POPPY FIELDS FOR ERADICATION PROGRAM AND HAS THEREFORE REQUESTED UPGRADING OF FIXED-WING RECONNAISSANCE FLEET(FYI: AVIATION OPERATIONS ADVISOR'S RECOMMENDATION NOW BEING PREPARED). RECON FLEET UPGRADING WILL PROVIDE IMPROVED POPPY DETECTION CAPABILITY IN HIGH CONCENTRATION AREAS, BUT NEITHER VISUAL RECON NOR MOPSS CAN

PROVIDE ALL OF THE INFORMATION WE AND THE GOM NEED.

3. MOPSS PROVED TO BE UNRELIABLE AND TOO SLOW FOR REGULAR OVERFLIGHTS OF LARGE AREAS TO DETERMINE IF POPPY CULTIVATION IS MOVING OUTSIDE TRADITIONAL AREAS, AND THE AREAS OF POTENTIAL POPPY CULTIVATION ARE TOO EXTENSIVE TO COVER BY VISUAL RECON (ESTIMATED TO BE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

1.5 MILLION SQUARE KILOMETERS). THUS, FIVE WEEKS AGO, WE AND THE GOM LEARNED TO OUR SURPRISE OF SIZEABLE POPPY CULTIVATIONS NORTHEAST OF HERMOSILLO. WHAT WE NEED IS SOME TOOL WHICH CAN SURVEY ALL OF MEXICO ON A PERIODIC BASIS IN ORDER TO TARGET VISUAL RECON FLIGHTS MORE EFFECTIVELY.

4. THE EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED FROM THE AEROSPACE SYSTEMS DIVISION OF BENDIX A PROPOSAL FOR AN INVESTIGATION OF JUST SUCH A SYSTEM. BENDIX PROPOSES, FOR A FEE OF \$28,200, A TWO-PHASE PROGRAM WHICH WOULD (A) DEMONSTRATE THE FEASIBILITY OF DETECTING POPPY FIELDS USING LANDSAT SATELLITE DATA, AND (B) EVALUATE THE OPERATIONAL PARAMETERS NECESSARY FOR THE DEFINITION OF AN OPERATIONAL SYSTEM. BENDIX HAS DEVELOPED IMAGE PROCESSING TECHNIQUES WHICH ARE CAPABLE OF RESTORING LANDSAT DATA TO DERIVE DATA WHICH SUPERSEDES THE ORIGINAL DATA BY A LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CONSIDERABLE MARGIN.

5. SIMPLY STATED, BENDIX BELIEVES, BASED ON ITS EXPERIENCE IN OTHER AREAS, THAT, USING AS REFERENCE POINTS KNOWN POPPY FIELDS, IT CAN TEACH A COMPUTER TO RECOGNIZE THE SPECTRAL SIGNATURE OF POPPY. WITH THIS INFORMATION, THE COMPUTER CAN THEN SCAN COMPUTER COMPATIBLE TAPES OF LANDSAT COVERAGE OF MEXICO TO IDENTIFY OTHER POPPY FIELDS. SINCE LANDSAT CURRENTLY COVERS ALL OF MEXICO ONCE EVERY 18 DAYS, THE SYSTEM PROPOSED BY BENDIX WOULD, IF IT WORKS, PROVIDE CURRENT INFORMATION ON WHERE CONCENTRATIONS OF POPPY ARE LOCATED AND PERMIT THE GOM TO TARGET ITS VISUAL RECON FLIGHTS ON THOSE AREAS. BENDIX STATES THAT SYSTEM SHOULD BE EQUALLY EFFECTIVE AGAINST MARIHUANA. THIS SYSTEM WOULD BE WORTH INVESTIGATING EVEN IF THIS WERE ALL IT COULD PRODUCE.

6. HOWEVER, THE BENDIX PROPOSAL STATES THAT IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE, USING THE SAME TECHNIQUE, TO LOCATE INDIVIDUAL FIELDS OF LESS THAN ONE ACRE AND TO HAVE LARGE-SCALE COMPUTER-GENERATED MAP OVERLAYS WHICH COULD BE USED BY THE SPRAY FLEET. THIS IS WHAT WE HAD HOPED MOPSS COULD PROVIDE, BUT IT DID NOT.

7. WE NOTE FROM THE BENDIX COVER LETTER TO THE EMBASSY THAT COPIES OF ITS PROPOSAL WERE SENT TO STATE (DUGSTAD) AND DEA (LEVINE).
8. WE HAVE NO WAY OF KNOWING IF THE SYSTEM PROPOSED BY BENDIX WILL WORK OR, IF SO, WHETHER IT CAN MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF TIMELINESS AND ACCURACY. WE REALIZE THAT THE PROPOSED SYSTEM WOULD BE SUBJECT TO SIMILAR CONSTRAINTS AS MOPSS AS CONCERNS ATMOSPHERIC CONDITIONS,

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CROP-TO-SURFACE COVERAGE RATIOS, CROP MATURITY, CANOPY COVERAGE, ETC. HOWEVER, THE USG SPENT A GREAT DEAL IN ITS ATTEMPTS TO SALVAGE MOPSS, TO NO AVAIL. IT SEEMS EMINENTLY REASONABLE TO INVEST \$28,200 TO DETERMINE IF THE SYSTEM PROPOSED BY BENDIX HAS MERIT.

9. RECOMMENDATION: WE RECOMMEND THAT THE DEPARTMENT IMMEDIATELY AUTHORIZE BENDIX TO PROCEED WITH ITS PROPOSED FEASIBILITY STUDY. IF APPROVED, WE SUGGEST THAT THE MOST RELIABLE WAY TO OBTAIN POSITIVE GROUND TRUTH FOR THE TEST WOULD BE TO ASK THE GOM TO PLANT A SERIES OF POPPY FIELDS AT THE AIRPORT IN CULIACAN AND AT THE FORWARD BASES. THE PRECISE COORDINATES OF THESE FIELDS COULD BE GIVEN TO BENDIX AND WOULD SERVE AS BENCH MARKS FOR THE TEST. FIELD SECURITY WOULD PRESENT NO PROBLEM SINCE THESE SITES HAVE FULL-TIME DETACHMENTS AND, BY STAGGERING THE PLANTING DATES, BENDIX WOULD HAVE BOTH MATURE AND IMMATURE FIELDS TO USE DURING THE TEST.
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